

THE AFGHANISTAN - U.S. DEMOCRATIC PEACE AND PROSPERITY COUNCIL

The Afghanistan-U.S. Democratic Peace and Prosperity Council (DPPC) is an organization dedicated to furthering a long-term alliance, forged in a strong mutual commitment to shared ideals, between Afghans and Americans. Recently launched in Washington, DC, the DPPC focuses on promoting policies and initiatives that better the lives of the Afghan people while holding the Afghan government accountable to provide basic services, protect human rights, adhere to democratic principles, and put an end to corruption.

The Council represents an Afghan population whose hope that a strong bond between the two countries will lead to a future where Afghanistan has peace, prosperity, and a functioning democracy.

CURRENT ISSUES

COVID-19 Poses A Significant Threat to Afghanistan's People and Government

In a report released on April 30, 2020 by SIGAR, John Spoko outlined the scope of the threat posed by COVID-19: "Afghanistan's numerous and, in some cases, unique vulnerabilities — a weak healthcare system, widespread malnutrition, porous border, massive internal displacement, contiguity with Iran, and ongoing conflict — make it likely the country will confront a health disaster in the coming months."

The international donor community has committed funding and supplies to GIROA, and GIROA has contributed what limited resources it has despite a shortage of food and medical supplies amid a Taliban insurgency. With the Health Ministry estimating up to 40% of the country's 32 million population will contract the virus, the implications are dire. One bright spot that has emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic is the emergence of Afghanistan's civil society and business community as a social safety net that has contributed personal resources to the response efforts. From the distribution of masks and sanitizers, providing medical care, delivering food, and waiving rent, Afghans

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are putting aside ethnic and political differences to defeat one of the world's greatest enemies today: COVID-19.

It is imperative that the U.S. stand behind the people of Afghanistan to help prevent a public health crisis and ensure that the ANDSF maintains operational readiness to defend against and counter the increasing number of violent attacks by the Taliban insurgency. [Read more.](#)

Parliament is the Voice of the People During Peace Negotiations

While Afghanistan battles the escalating COVID-19 crisis, it is also engaged in peace negotiations with the Taliban insurgency. The ongoing political dispute between Ashraf Ghani and Dr. Abdullah over the presidential election results has weakened Afghanistan's hand in the peace negotiations and taken focus away from national priorities. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo recently traveled to Kabul to mediate the ongoing feud between the two leaders, urging them to put aside their political differences and prioritize the peacemaking process or risk a full troop withdrawal and significant reduction of aid from the United States. Following Secretary Pompeo's recent visit, the Parliament of Afghanistan is taking a leading role to mediate an end to this dispute.

A troop withdrawal or cuts to funding and military support to the Afghan government will undoubtedly jeopardize Afghanistan's democracy and the peace process. Without a U.S. commitment to the future of Afghanistan, there is a very high likelihood that the Taliban will take over the country by force. The people of Afghanistan deserve peace and a post-conflict resolution process, but it cannot come at the expense of the personal freedoms and democracy that Afghans have fought so hard to earn and maintain. To ensure that the voice of the people of Afghanistan is heard throughout the peace process, the Parliament has established a Special Commission on Peace, appointed delegates to participate in the peace negotiations, and ensured that any future peace agreement requires a majority vote by Parliament before it can be ratified.

Despite warnings of consequences from U.S. officials, the Taliban insurgency continues to ramp up its attacks rather than adhering to its commitment to a reduction in violence. Any agreement reached with the Taliban must protect democracy and personal freedoms for all Afghans — especially women and children. While obstacles remain for Af-

ghanistan to attain peace and prosperity, until an agreement is reached, the Taliban insurgency must uphold its commitment and afford political leadership, on both sides, the opportunity to determine the peacemaking process. [Read more.](#)

DOD Must Manage ANDSF Fuel Contracts — A No Fail Mission

We are at a critical moment in the history of the Afghan conflict. The readiness and effectiveness of the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) has never been more important to the U.S. and Afghanistan's ability to achieve their military and political goals. Transitioning contract administration to the ANDSF in an aspirational outcome for both the U.S. and Afghanistan, but it is not a practical solution now and for the foreseeable future until there is additional capacity building and training for the ANDSF contracting corps. Administering ANDSF Fuel Contracts "off-budget," through the Army Contracting Command, serves the best interest of U.S. policy goals in Afghanistan, Afghanistan's National Security and is the only means available to reduce the likelihood of criminality and corruption in the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's (GIROA's) procurement activities. The Parliament of Afghanistan has affirmed this position and added authorizing language to GIROA's FY2020 budget prohibiting it from administering high dollar contracts funded through foreign aid.

The Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A) has been the primary U.S. agency responsible for supplying fuel to the ANDSF. CSTC-A's prior attempts in 2014-2017 to transition the ANDSF Fuel Contract administration "on-budget," through the Afghanistan Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of Interior (MoI) ended in failure, plagued by mismanagement, diminished fuel supplies and readiness for the ANDSF. These attempts at "on-budget" contracting also led to the arrests of dozens of high level Afghan officials and businessmen, over \$150M of fuel theft, and emergency action to transition the contracts back "off-budget" to the Army Contracting Command. Since February 2017, CSTC-A had moved all ANDSF ground fuel procurement "off-budget" due to concerns about contract mismanagement and corruption within Afghanistan's MOD and MOI. [Read more.](#)

- An April 2018 report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) noted at least \$154.4 million of fuel has been lost or stolen in Afghanistan.

- Lack of accountability and oversight in the ANDSF contracting process, and corruption throughout the fuel industry and the country, has and will continue to create opportunities for the Taliban insurgency, Iran, and Russia to prosper from U.S. funding.
 - Keeping fuel contracts "off-budget" ensures soldiers and tax payers are both protected.
 - As U.S. resources become increasingly scarce, it is critical for the mission in Afghanistan that the accountability measures increase rather than decrease.
 - Army Contracting Command must ensure its staff has experience in contingency contracting and local conditions to avoid the high likelihood of criminality by unknown or unproven Afghan fuel vendors taking advantage of self-certification and Low Price Technically Acceptable requirements on existing fuel contract recompetes.
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STAY IN TOUCH

The DPPC is hopeful about the future of Afghanistan and its relationship with the United States. We ask those that share our hope to learn more about us and our mission at www.thedppc.com.

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800 Maine Ave. SW Washington, DC 20024

<https://www.thedppc.org>

info@dppc.com

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